



Fact Sheet

Witness Security Division

The U.S. Marshals Service provides for the security, health and safety of government witnesses, and their immediate dependents, whose lives are in danger as a result of their testimony against drug traffickers, terrorists, organized crime members and other major criminals.

The Witness Security Program was authorized by the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 and amended by the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984. The U.S. Marshals have protected, relocated and given new identities to more than 8,200 witnesses and 9,800 of their family members, since the program began in 1971.

The successful operation of this program is widely recognized as providing a unique and valuable tool in the government's battle against major criminal conspirators and organized crime.

Witnesses and their families typically get new identities with authentic documentation. Housing, subsistence for basic living expenses and medical care are provided to the witnesses. Job training and employment assistance may also be provided.

The U.S. Marshals provide 24-hour protection to all witnesses while they are in a high-threat environment including pretrial conferences, trial testimonials and other court appearances.

No Witness Security Program participant who followed security guidelines has been harmed while under the active protection of the U.S. Marshals.

In both criminal and civil matters involving protected witnesses, the U.S. Marshals cooperate fully with local law enforcement and court authorities to bring witnesses to justice or to have them fulfill their legal responsibilities.